

Performing the 50th anniversary of a Garden City:

Staging time, place, and identity.

Marjana Johansson

Center for Economic Psychology
Stockholm School of Economics
P.O. Box 6501, SE-113 83 Stockholm, Sweden
marjana.johansson@hhs.se

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Abstract

This paper describes the organising of a 50th anniversary of an urban community. The focus is specifically on how ideas of identity related to a past were manifested in various events. The organising of the anniversary is described in terms of temporary organising, where the activities of different actors form the basis for how the anniversary is conceptualised and performed. The study was conducted using an ethnographic approach.

Keywords : anniversary, event management, temporary organising, identity, municipality, garden city.

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In late April 2003 I hurry through the centre of an urban area near Helsinki called Tapiola to attend a meeting with the local entrepreneurs' association. As I cross the concrete-plated open space between the bowling alley and the cultural centre, I pause, and take in the architectural landscape surrounding me. In front of me stands the cultural centre, white in colour and pristine in character. It was built in the late 80s and displays an example of the newer features of Tapiola. To my right looms the Central Tower, a high-rise office building with a closed down restaurant on the top floor. The Tower has served as a landmark since its completion in 1961. The square is littered with remnants of the annual jazz festival, which has taken place the previous weekend. I have been told that the music scene in Tapiola is quite vivid.

Behind the cultural centre, some ten white banners carrying the text 'Tapiola 50' are hoisted by the main road as a reminder of the festive character of this year. It is indeed the 50th anniversary of Tapiola, and what better opportunity than that to organise a stream of events to commemorate the architectural heritage, celebrate the cultural richness, and rejuvenate the diminishing commerce. The meeting I am about to attend is yet one piece of the organisational jigsaw puzzle that makes up the anniversary. Before the anniversary culminates on September 6th, there will have been many more meetings, and I in my role of curious researcher want to be a witness to this event-making extravaganza.

Five months later the main party is over and I am many experiences richer.

The society of the spectacle?

We are supposedly witnessing the flourishing of an experience economy, where appearance is of utmost importance and putting on a show is part and parcel of being successful (Pine & Gilmore 1999). The commercialisation and spectacularisation of the arts (Guillet de Monthoux 1998) and society (Debord 1967) seem to be topics that occupy a central position in contemporary management theory and practice. Commodities and services are said to no longer satisfy the consumers' demands. Instead, added value and commitment should be created through *experiences* aimed at engaging the customer emotionally (e.g. Jensen 1999). A substantial number of practitioners' handbooks on the subject do their best to argue that *events* provide efficient means of creating such experiences.

An event can be seen as an occurrence, a set of activities limited in time and space (Handelman 1990; Berg, Linde-Laursen and Löfgren 2002). Definitions of ‘event’ range from ‘anything that happens, an incident’ to ‘the physical happening which occurs at and identifies a particular place and time’ to ‘occurrences of some importance’ (Oxford English Dictionary Online). Events can be said to be governed by ‘event-time’ and ‘event-space’, thus constituting an alternative realm to that of everyday life (Ristilammi 2000). Events may be perceived as having varying degrees of fuzziness regarding permeability of boundaries and subsequent seepage into ‘reality’.

Popular event management authors Joseph Pine and James Gilmore argue that events should be based on a plot, designed as an ‘arrangement of incidents’, to produce a holistic experience (1999:104). In Swedish, the person or organisation in charge of organising an event is often called an ‘arranger’. Apart from signifying the act of ‘putting into proper order or suitable sequence’ (Merriam-Webster’s), arranging also implies settling relations between parties, conflicting claims or matters in dispute’ and ‘to make a settlement with other persons as to a matter to be done, so that all concerned in it shall do their part’ (Oxford English Dictionary Online). Finally, arrange is also referred to as ‘to stage’, as in planning, organising and carrying out an event (Wordnet). In the case of Tapiola, it was indeed a patchwork of sub-events organised by various parties that was to make up the overall anniversary plot. Some of the sub-events were specially created for the anniversary, whereas others would have been organised anyway, but were promoted under the organisational umbrella and logo of Tapiola 50¹.

A plot is generally characterised by *sequentiality* (Bruner 1990; Handelman 1990; also, see Ristilammi 2000 for elaborations on the spatial and temporal sequences of events). The sequential design, argues ethnographer Donald Handelman, ‘is often associated with goal-directed activity and so is informed with intention’ (p. 12). An event is thus expected to ‘do’ something; it has an intended, performative meaning beyond gathering people in a certain place at a certain time to witness or partake in a staged performance of some sort.

Assuming this intentionality, events could be attributed with a logic of organising. Handelman (1990) formulates a logic that orders events into ones that *model*, *present*, or *re-present* the lived-

¹ ‘Tapiola 50’ refers to the project as well as the anniversary, a distinction discussed further on in the paper.

in world. Events that *model* the lived-in world are designed microcosms thereof, with a specific inbuilt purpose. They provide a model for grasping a current or future ‘reality’ outside the event and have a transformative function (e.g. initiation rites). In contrast, an event that *presents* the lived-in world acts as a mirror-image of it, highlighting certain aspects but not striving for change. It attempts at depicting the state of affairs ‘as they are’² and does not contain contradictions or conflicts, as in the case of an event-that-models. The aspects highlighted through events-that-present are cemented rather than altered. They are ‘a mirror held up to reflect versions of the organisation of society that are intended by the makers of the occasion’ (p. 8). Finally, an event that *re-presents* the lived-in world plays with inversions of societal orders. It does not in itself strive for change of those orders, but presents them in a carnivalesque fashion and then reinstates order. If contained within itself, an event that re-presents does not overthrow a prevailing order, but it may happen as a consequence of what occurs in the interface between the event and the lived-in world. A deliberate play with societal order such as a masked carnival, can in that sense be a ‘dangerous’ and potent event, in that it may ‘get out of hand’ in a fertile ground, transcending its boundaries (see e.g. *Carnival in Romans* by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie).

Among labels that signify some form of event we find ceremony, carnival, rite of passage, ritual, and spectacle, to name but a few (Handelman 1990:14). I am especially enticed by the pompous character of the latter. A *spectacle* is ‘a specially prepared or arranged display of a more or less public nature, forming an impressive or interesting show or entertainment for those viewing it’ (Oxford English Dictionary Online). However, it also signifies ‘mere acting or show, empty or specious display, show without substance’ (ibid.). The all-pervasive, empty spectacleness of contemporary society was sharply brought forward by Guy Debord (1967/1995):

As the indispensable packaging for things produced as they are now produced, as a general gloss on the rationality of the system, and as the advanced economic sector directly responsible for the manufacture of an ever-growing mass of image-objects, the spectacle is the *chief product* of present-day society. (p. 16, original italics.)

² Presentation does not, however, assume an ‘objective’ image, as decisions on which elements to highlight are made according to some criteria.

A spectacle, then, has a grandiose tone and dramatic, not always positive, quality to it. In popular event management literature, spectacles are not described as mere visual wizardries. They are seen as an aesthetic-emotionally engaging technique with the aim of immersing its audience (Pine and Gilmore 1999; Bowdin, McDonnell, Allen and O'Toole 2002). The suggestion is that images, ideas and dreams can be packaged and commodified by attributing them with a compelling story (Jensen 1999). A story calls for a narration reaching from the past to the present to the future, and the notion and visualising of passage of time constitutes a technique for managing events (Ristilampi 2000).

A short story of Tapiola Garden City³

'Tapiola Garden City, founded in 1952 (sic), remains a unique experiment in Finland - a community created through the joint efforts of a single landowner and civic bodies. From a very early stage, the press propagated the idea of Tapiola as a project where architects could freely experiment with their ideas. Although these experiments had to be carried out under economic and other post-war restrictions, and were to a large degree dictated by them, some of the most talented Finnish architects of the 1950's were able to create significant innovations and one of the best residential environments of its day.' (Tuomi 2001.)

The foundation stone of Tapiola was laid on September 5th, 1953, in a cut clearing in the woods some eight kilometres west of Helsinki. The name of the area was at that point Hagalund, after the estate off which land had been bought for the project.⁴ The name Tapiola was later established as a result of a public contest. Funding for acquiring the land had been secured the previous year, when the parliament passed the budget proposition for the fiscal year 1953, including in it a loan to the newly founded Housing Foundation. The foundation had been established by a number of civic bodies for the purpose of building Tapiola. Still, the lion's share of funding would have to be acquired to get the project off the ground. The involvement of several banks and insurance agencies finally brought the required capital together. The official ceremony of laying the foundation stone was performed among others by Heikki von Hertzen,

³ My recapitulation of the planning and building of Tapiola is based on von Hertzen, H. and Itkonen, U. (1985), and Tuomi (1992).

⁴ Hagalund has remained the official Swedish name of Tapiola.

who was chairman of the board of the Housing Foundation, and the visionary behind the ambitious project. Heikki von Hertzen came to personify the creation of Tapiola. His conviction can be traced back to Ebenezer Howard's garden city ideals.⁵ In the garden city, rural and urban features would be successfully combined, as '[h]uman society and nature are meant to be enjoyed together' (Howard 1902/1965:48). Von Hertzen had stated his opinion against densely built areas as 'socially unhealthy phenomena' (von Hertzen and Itkonen 1985:14) in his book 'Homes or barracks for our children'⁶ published in 1946. He favoured the construction of spacious residential areas integrated with nature, away from the hectic and degenerate city life.

After land had been secured, a team of four prominent Finnish architects was commissioned to plan the residential housing areas. A competition was held regarding the centre, which was to be the seat for administrative, commercial and cultural activities. Architect Aarne Ervi, one of the names now intimately associated with the Geist of Tapiola, walked away with first prize. The winning design was jocularly but aptly called 'Don Hertzen Village'. The first residential buildings were ready by 1954.

As Ebenezer Howard enthused on the Garden City to pave the way for 'a new hope, a new life, a new civilization' (1902/1965:48), so did Tapiola harbour a promise of a bright future. It would provide all the facilities and functions for a balanced and productive existence of its inhabitants:

'The planners of Tapiola did not only want to build dwellings or houses but also a socially right environment for modern man and his family. [...] Man is an essential part of creation and his connection with nature should not be severed. Barrack-like housing and miserable backyards are poor solutions and therefor Tapiola became a garden city.'

(Text excerpt from an information board photographed in 1971. Published in Tuomi (ed.) 2003.)

Tapiola could be said to be one representation of an 'utopics' – a social practice within which utopian ideals are spatially expressed, a *spatial play*.

⁵ Much earlier, a similar concept was actually proposed by Leonardo da Vinci, as Lewis Mumford points out in his introduction to the 1965 edition of Howard's 'Garden cities of To-morrow'. More than aiming at finding out a source of the idea, this note may serve as yet another example of how ideas reappear in different contexts (see Czarniawska and Sevón 1996).

‘[W]e see examples of it in such things as town planning, modernist architecture, landscape gardening, prison design and civic building. In these forms of spatial play we witness a modernising utopics put into practice in which future-oriented ideas about order, improvement and development were expressed through certain kinds of planned social space and the discourse surrounding them’. (Hetherington 2001:51, who refers to Louis Marin’s term utopics.)

The design of Tapiola combined a garden city ideology with functional, modernist architecture, much in the spirit of Le Corbusier.⁷ Habitation was to be separated from workspace and transport infrastructure. Housing areas were to be intercepted by woods and parks. The natural topography was to be respected. Tall buildings were constructed to define the landscape, mixed with low ones. The garden city concept would, however, face criticism in Finland in the decade following the initiation of Tapiola. To spread housing over a large area was considered uneconomical, especially with increasing commuting. Also, the revered idea of living close to nature had by the 60s turned into suspicions that it might actually be unbeneficial for mental health (Tuomi 1992). During the years, the original plan of Tapiola has been modified in the face of ideological change, and practical pressure. In the early 70s, construction was undertaken to extend and condense the centre. Today, there is anew a call for continued construction development, largely due to insufficient residential housing.

The demographic structure of an area is reflected in the type of commercial, social and cultural services supplied. The average age of the 18.000 people that now live in Tapiola is increasing showing a correlation in age with the buildings they inhabit. Such correlation is usually stronger in areas that have been built within a relatively short time span. At the moment, however, a generation shift is taking place, and the rapidly decreasing number of children that started showing in the sixties and continued into the nineties is now expected to level out. (Laakso and Munter 2003.) Statistically, the inhabitants of Tapiola show a higher level of education and a higher level of income compared to the average level of the whole Helsinki region (Laakso and Munter 2003). The households thus have considerable spending power, but it does not

⁶ My translation of the original Finnish title: ‘Koti vaiko kasarmi lapsillemme’.

⁷ The result is a curious mix of Howard’s decentralised small-scale town and Le Corbusier’s metropolitan landscape. Their common denominator, however, was an idea of creating a better alternative to the prevailing urban misery they perceived (Fishman 1977).

necessarily gain Tapiola directly. Commercial growth centres in the region take their toll. Nevertheless, Tapiola's semi-centenary was to be celebrated by having a big birthday bash.

'Everything good together in one'

At the turn of the millennium, the city council of Espoo⁸ decided to give Tapiola a 50th birthday gift⁹ in the form of funding to arrange events throughout the year 2003. The main celebrations were to take place during the first week of September. Of all conceivable alternatives, the decision-makers chose a seemingly ludic one. Of course, it is common to mark an anniversary by arranging a party. In Western society, fifty generally marks a milestone. For individuals, reaching fifty is associated with having achieved a certain maturity and life experience, while still constituting a productive member of society. For an urban area it might not add up to much, but it is nevertheless of symbolic value. So why not celebrate this milestone of Tapiola. Fiftieth birthdays often focus on what has been achieved in the past, but the anniversary also provided an opportunity for a future-oriented outlook. Having passed its heyday of architectural and ideological marvel and facing the said threat from nearby growth centres, Tapiola may benefit from physical, commercial, and perhaps spiritual rejuvenation.

A project manager, Lea, was employed in March 2002 to take on the role of party organiser par excellence. She was employed by the cultural director of Espoo. He was in charge of the Helsinki Cultural Capital 2000 project, before being appointed to his present office in 2001. Lea had also worked for the Cultural Capital project.. Albeit being on the payroll of the municipality with the cultural director as her superior, Lea positioned herself as a kind of an outsider. She portrayed her task as strenuous sometimes, in that she alone made virtually all decisions concerning the organising of the anniversary, without having colleagues to use as sounding boards.

The total project budget was estimated at 400.000 euros, of which one third was to be supplied by the municipality, while the rest would have to be acquired from sponsors. Unfavourable economic developments forced the municipality to cut spending, and 50.000 euros that were

⁸ Espoo is the municipality where Tapiola is situated.

⁹ The project manager used the term 'gift' during my first interview with her, when I asked her how the anniversary idea was conceived.

originally allocated for the anniversary were subsequently reallocated. Nevertheless, Lea was successful in negotiating with sponsors, reaching the set target. Unsurprisingly, the Housing Foundation was the main sponsor. The official anniversary logo reflected the architecture of Tapiola¹⁰:



The design above the name symbolises the rooftops of three distinct buildings popularly called ‘the hip flasks’, that are intimately tied to the image of Tapiola. A direct English translation of the slogan would be ‘Everything good together in one’. The logo is to become the permanent official logo of Tapiola, lasting beyond the anniversary (the number 50 will be removed).

Tapiola 50 as an ethnographic case study

My choice of case would, following the terminology of Robert Stake (2000), be instrumental more than the result of an intrinsic interest. My instrumental interest, then, is based on gaining insight into a phenomenon that may be called event organising, and attempting to draw some generalisable conclusions regarding it. However, as the case progressed and I learned more about the specific circumstances of Tapiola, I also developed an interest in the case as such. As Stake points out, the categories are not mutually exclusive, and are to be seen as heuristic more than determinative (2000:438). At the start of my study, the main event week was seven months away. I was pleased at the prospect of being able to get a longitudinal grasp and I adopted an ethnographic approach. To observe the actions of the people who were involved in the project and others whom I met during the process, I shared ‘real time-space’ (Calori 2002) with them,

¹⁰ The logo was commissioned from an advertising agency.

striving to give account of events as they occurred. As for the recording of meetings and conversations, my basic approach followed the seemingly uncomplicated notion of recording at least what one sees and hears, and how one behaves and is being treated (Silverman 2000:126).

Being in the field necessarily entails relating to the people one meets. My relation to Lea merits some discussion. She was officially the sole person in charge of organising the anniversary and I spent most of my time in Tapiola with her. As the case study progressed we developed a familiar tone in our conversations. When we scheduled upcoming meetings, she was the one suggesting which meetings I should attend, thereby conducting a selection process based on some criteria. Usually, this entailed choosing meetings ‘where something would happen’, i.e. meetings that she deemed were central for the project. I am aware of one meeting that I was not granted access to, following the wish of Lea’s superior. In addition, there might of course have been meetings she did not inform me of, thus excluding me without my knowledge. I do not, however, consider this to be a critical issue, as it is common practice to establish limits to access in case studies.

My role was usually overt, in that I was introduced as a researcher in the meetings I attended (on one occasion I was not introduced at all). In addition, I participated in a number of events. At the sponsor evening, I was one of the invited guests, mingling with others (and stating my position as researcher if asked). At the entrepreneurs’ street event, I took on a working role, volunteering to hand out balloons (and narrowly escaping dressing up as a bear). When participating in staged events, I largely drew upon Ristilammi (2002) and Sevón (2002) for observation guidelines. The sequences I made note of were 1) drawing near the place of the event, 2) gaining access (e.g. buying a ticket, presenting an invitation), 3) entering the event space/s, 4) observing the physical space, 5) stratification of those present, 6) interaction, 7) settling into place, 8) start of the event, 9) end of the event and 10) material manifestation of the event (e.g. merchandise, mementos). In addition to taking notes, I documented the events in photographs and video recordings.

A case presents a complex whole, and it is lastly the researcher who frames it through selected conceptualisations and presented conclusions. Ethnographies, as other texts, make use of various stylistic and rhetorical tools, aiming to give the text an air of *vraisemblance* (Atkinson 1990), a seemingly truthful character, to warrant its authenticity. The introduction to this paper could be said to be written to provide ‘the warrant of first-hand, authentic and ‘realistic’ reportage, whereby the reader is introduced to a convincingly plausible reality’ (Atkinson 1990:71). Writing

and packaging the field (Czarniawska 1998) is an exercise in intellectual grasp and stylistic savvy. Certainly, it is tempting to make the text a flawless whole, ridding it of the repetitions and ambiguities that are present in any organising process. The end result may be smooth, but it is achieved at the cost of losing vitality and texture. When writing about representations of the flow of time, Mary Jo Hatch (2002:871) refers to artist David Hockney's 'joiners', collages made of photographs that are nearly identical, but include gaps and overlaps so that the viewer sees the whole picture but the fragments are always slightly off. 'The gaps and overlaps make you aware that seeing involves overlooking (not seeing everything) and duplication (seeing some things repeatedly)'. The arrangement brings a dynamic quality to a photograph – a quality to strive for also when picturing dynamic events in text. I find this a compelling analogy to bear in mind when making sense of a process such as the one at hand.

Tapiola 50 as temporary organising

Time seems to constitute a recurring theme of my study in several ways. One relates to temporary aspects of organisation. What was being organised was referred to as 'the anniversary' or 'the project', depending on the context. According to Lea, 'anniversary' was generally used when communicating externally about the event, 'project' was used when discussing it with the actors involved in the organising. Both labels connote an occurrence set within a specific time frame. Organisations that exist within such a preconceived time frame can be framed as temporary ones (Lundin and Söderholm 1995; Packendorff 1995; Sahlin-Andersson and Söderholm 2002; Lundin and Steinthórsson 2003). The notion of temporary organising constitutes an alternative to a normative view on projects (Lundin and Söderholm 1995; Engwall, Steinthórsson and Söderholm 2002). Rather than viewing a project as the management of givens, the descriptive approach of temporary organisations aims at exploring underlying ideas and processes. In the words of Packendorff (1995:328): 'What is to be studied, in fact, is temporary organizing processes, i.e. the deliberate social interaction occurring between people working together to accomplish a certain, inter-subjectively determined task'. A temporary view shifts the attention from reified notions of organisations and their structures to actions undertaken within the temporal boundaries. The project Tapiola 50 may be seen as existing as a formally expressed and physically manifested municipal entity with a budget, appointed responsible persons and a formulated task. The anniversary Tapiola 50 could perhaps be seen as an organising of activities,

bearing marks of what Barbara Czarniawska terms action nets (Czarniawska 1997). The anniversary came together based on the ‘coupling’ of activities that seemed to fit the purpose, more than based on actors that one might assume would be part of the anniversary. For example, one particular cultural establishment seemed to be a natural actor to involve on the basis of its central position. Lea contacted the director at an early stage, but collaboration never really took off, as there did not seem to be a mutual understanding of which actions to perform in relation to the anniversary.

Seeing the anniversary as a temporary organisation from an action net perspective highlights the activities and the meaning they were given by the actors involved. As such, it is aspect that may be further developed in subsequent work.

Aims and audiences

Following Handelman’s proposed logic of events, the Tapiola anniversary seems to come close to an event that presents the lived-in world, put together by ‘the makers of the occasion’. Within the frame of the anniversary past, present, and future aspects of Tapiola were dramatised and displayed through various events. An event needs to be placed in a context – it has to ‘fit’. In so doing, a narrative space is opened up for it (Ristilammi 2000). In the case of Tapiola, perhaps the anniversary could be seen as placed in a ‘uniqueness’, or ‘heritage’ narrative, simultaneously providing an opportunity to promote a ‘future’ narrative. The organising becomes akin to dramatising a script that intends to tell some story about Tapiola. The aim of the anniversary was, according to Lea, to give Tapiola some attention:

[Marjana]: Okay, so if we talk about the project, which would you say the aims of the project are?

[Lea]: The aims are, well... sort of multidimensional but quite simple of course, primarily to display the offering and variety of Tapiola, that is, to make known everything that happens here and show how rich in activities this area is... and then of course Tapiola has for several reasons lagged behind in the internal development of Espoo so one of the ideas of this project has been that the municipality kind of

presents Tapiola with a gift by making note of the fiftieth anniversary because Tapiola is after all a kind of an exceptional place in Espoo.

Excerpt from interview transcript, February 26th.

We are told that Tapiola is exceptional on the one hand, but neglected by the municipality on the other hand, and that both aspects will be addressed in organising the anniversary. In order to fulfil the stated aim of making Tapiola noticed, certain organising decisions had to be made. What aspects of Tapiola should be highlighted, and how? Who should be involved? How should the anniversary be seen and heard – and whom should it primarily be aimed at? The spatial and temporal boundaries in terms of planned activities seemed to be quite clear: the area Tapiola, the year 2003, and the actual birthday on September 5th. But what about the content boundaries?

[Marjana]: Yes... how are then these... events or productions made, are they sort of tailor-made or how do you choose between them?

[Lea]: Yes. Well, we have decided that we should select [among the suggestions] as little as possible because this is such a local thing that it could easily encounter... problems and also, we have quite a small budget as in for example in comparison with the culture year [Helsinki Cultural Capital in 2000] and we don't have money as such to give to the producers but... actually we only produce a few things ourselves, the majority of these events, I mean almost all of them, are things that happen here anyway in this area, anniversary or no anniversary, or maybe they are being done in a more extravagant fashion this year.

Excerpt from interview transcript, February 26th.

The idea of a local, community-spirited anniversary is presented, where initiatives are welcomed although they cannot get direct financial support from the project.¹¹ Also, the anniversary would

¹¹ The projects and events that received direct funding from the project budget were the publishing of an anniversary book about Tapiola, an international architecture conference called 'The Roots and Seeds of the Garden City', a commissioned piece for the Tapiola Choir and the Tapiola Music Institute, a VIP reception on September 5th, and an open-air concert on September 6th.

gather independently organised events under one umbrella, thus giving the impression of a cornucopia. The attribute ‘plentiful’ was often mentioned by Lea in relation to the impression that the overall programme and the particular events should give. At a couple of occasions I became aware of some kind of screening of suggested events. Some suggestions were not realised within the project, as they were too ‘motley’ in character, did not seem to fit the overall programme, or fell into oblivion because Lea was not kept informed of how the planning progressed. The selection process was not based on explicit criteria, but seemed to evolve according to circumstances.

An event is always staged *for* someone, and the anniversary had its proclaimed intended audiences. Again, a local, community-focused profile was presented when talking about whom the anniversary was for:

[Marjana]: Yes. Umm... for whom is it meant... the anniversary?

[Lea]: Well, it is of course primarily meant for the inhabitants of Tapiola and Espoo... and of course it primarily concerns the inhabitants of Tapiola and secondly the inhabitants of Espoo, this is not a national festival, we have not set out to do one of those. But during this first week in September [the main week of the anniversary] we will of course try to gain visibility on a national level and... because after all, Tapiola is known all over Finland, people know or have at least heard what Tapiola is.

Excerpt from interview transcript, February 26th.

The stated primary audience, then, was the inhabitants of Tapiola. Given that, they should have had at least one thing in common: living there. The degree to which these people may feel emotionally tied to Tapiola, or committed to its well-being is of course anyone’s guess. Nevertheless, the proclaimed focus on the community’s inhabitants should not be ignored. However, not all events were organised or marketed with the local community in mind. There seemed to be a (rhetorical at least) distinction between ‘local’ and ‘alien’ target groups. Similarly, there seemed to be an explicit distinction between ‘common’ and ‘highbrow’ sub-events. The distinctions were reflected in the types of events (such as the sponsor evening and VIP reception,

which were restricted to invited guests, versus the guided walks, architecture lectures, the main concert, and the street event, which were accessible for all), and in the types of proclaimed target audiences ('invited dignitaries' versus 'common people'). The distinction and its suggested stratification seemed to be a matter of some concern, at least for Lea:

Lea says the anniversary is to be free of charge for the inhabitants of Tapiola; there is a discussion whether the main week [in September] is seemingly full of activities, but actually is being offered to the 'party dignitaries' as opposed to the 'ordinary people of Tapiola', who after all should be an important target group. The birthday party [on September 6th] is going to be 'carnavalesque'. T asks whom the [architecture] lectures are aimed at, Lea says 'the ordinary Tapiola people', and she says the lectures should therefore contain 'ordinary, basic things'.

Excerpt from notes of a meeting at the Museum of Finnish Architecture, April 4th.

She says again that she is wondering whether there are enough events for ordinary Tapiola people, with the lectures and guided walks, and then the 6th of September, which is a 'people's party'.

Excerpt from notes of a conversation between her and I in her office, April 25th.

The entrepreneurs of Tapiola also had their explicit aims in conjunction with the anniversary. Earlier in 2003, they had founded an association with the purpose of boosting business. Lea and the entrepreneurs organised some events in cooperation. In one of the planning meetings I attended, the entrepreneurs were briefing a newly hired advertising agency on how Tapiola could be promoted. But what is Tapiola – or rather, which is the image that should be conveyed in order to create a sense of vitality, and win customers?

M-L [the proprietor of a store] points out that she does not think that Tapiola is a shopping centre. 'If not that', says E [a representative of the advertising agency], 'what is it?'. R [the CEO of a store] says that when she was a child, she thought of Tapiola as Little Helsinki. M [the proprietor of a store] refers to the slogan that has been formulated for the anniversary – Everything good together in one – and says that there is more to Tapiola than retailers, there are dentists and masseurs... M-L

says 'this is a city'. J [the marketing manager of a department store] says 'maybe a city centre?' but then follows it up with a pensive 'no...what would bring out the 'yes!''?. Then R says 'Aren't we a garden city?', to which M-L retorts by pointing out recent municipal saving initiatives, rounding off her outburst with 'What garden city? This is not a garden city! Maybe sometimes in the fifties but not anymore.'

Excerpt from field notes from a meeting of the entrepreneurs' association, April 29th.

To the entrepreneurs, the garden city heritage is not of key importance when planning a marketing strategy. However, an architecture conference called 'The Roots and Seeds of the Garden City' was included in the anniversary programme with the purpose of capitalising on the garden city heritage. Other activities also focused on the birth and evolvement of Tapiola, such as public guided walks through selected areas and architecture lectures in cooperation with the Museum of Finnish Architecture. Film documentaries picturing the early stages of Tapiola's building were retrieved from the Finnish Film Archive and screened in the local cinema.¹² The future architectural landscape was presented in the form of an exhibition and multimedia show in the cultural centre, displaying planned construction projects. The activities can be related to ideas of an identity, where a sense of place is literally brought forward to remind us of our particular circumstance.

The anniversary as narrating confirmation and transformation?

For an initial discussion on identity and urban communities, I refer to architect Pekka V. Virtanen (1998) who cautiously defines identity in relation to a place as a feeling of belonging and a sense of community. Conceptually, he separates identity from image, with the latter having an extrinsic quality – it is a commonly stated perception of a place. An image is constructed from notions of physical attributes of a place, and activities and people related to it (Virtanen 1998:9). I do not wish to treat these concepts as ostensive definitions, but as a basis for exploring features of (the image of) Tapiola that were brought into play by the anniversary. Tapiola 'is' the Central Tower, the 'hip flasks', and other physical structures, and inherent in the physical structure is a narration

¹² I concluded that the propagandistic, yet naïve films seemed to provide enough material for a separate study, as I appreciatingly chuckled my way through them.

of its ideology and history. Tapiola 'is' also classical music and choirs, that is, activities. Especially earlier, it derogatorily 'was' so-called better people (Tuomi 2003), related to an idea of wealth of those who lived there. Internationally, Tapiola 'is' perhaps a Garden City, but for those who live there – the primary target audience of the anniversary – it is many other things.

Virtanen also discusses identity in relation to a perceived authenticity of a place. Further, he relates authenticity to originality. However, the question is not whether Tapiola is essentially original, and therefore unique. Seen from a translation perspective, the notion of original versus copy loses its relevance (Sevón 1996). Instead, what becomes of interest is the process by which ideas are contextualised and recontextualised.¹³

When writing about the inauguration of the Öresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark in 2000, Berg (2002) describes the event as being staged with the purpose of invoking a region. By attributing the inauguration with props and performances associated with the two nations and their common future (e.g. the monarchs and their heirs meeting and greeting), an image of a mutual endeavour connected to a specific region, the Öresund region was invoked. In Tapiola's case the area was said to be in need of commemoration and revitalisation.

Stated reasons for organising the anniversary related to threats of decline, as well as movement forward. Reasons for decline related to ideology (the original idea being anachronistic and tampered with along the way) and business (more dynamic growth centres springing up in the vicinity). The presented fortes of Tapiola related to culture and the arts, and a strong sense of community. We are also being reminded of the heritage (the anniversary book, a series of articles in Finland's largest daily newspaper). The anniversary could be seen as a vehicle for addressing the perceived present state of Tapiola, and outlining a preferred future one. Perhaps the anniversary provides an opportunity for what Richard Ek calls an *ontological transformation* (Ek 2002, referring to Gunnar Olsson). The formulation of a vision complete with a slogan, and the undertaking of spatial restructuring ('tidying up' in time for the anniversary, renovating buildings

¹³ The city that claims the epithet 'The world's first garden city' is Letchworth, initiated in 1903 according to Howard's ideals. Consequently, Letchworth's centenary celebrations coincided with Tapiola's semi-centenary. See <http://lgc2003.com/index.html>.

and pedestrian areas) support an idea of Tapiola in transformation, perhaps coming out more vibrant at the other end of the festive rite.

The anniversary, then, becomes a cultural staging of ideas of what Tapiola is. Fifty years does not per se constitute an exceptional time in history of a community. Instead, the event opens up for further exploring when we turn the tables and look at the anniversary not as a result of Tapiola turning fifty, but as a staging that ‘made Tapiola turn fifty’, in a broader sense brought some aspects of Tapiola into being. The anniversary may then be seen in relation to opening up a narrative space, not merely as being a consequence of an accomplished state.

Concluding considerations

The anniversary was largely tied to time: to the passage of it and to what might lie ahead. Simultaneously, it was situated in time and space, where ideas of Tapiola were translated into a present context and staged as events (and subsequently objectified, see Czarniawska and Joerges 1996). Perhaps the anniversary could be seen as making use of ‘time-space extension’, making the reproduction of a context possible (Hernes 2003:273). In the guise of the anniversary, the past is brought to us by guides dressed in copies of the original 60s outfit as organised by the city museum, pointing to a presence of the past in the present. The anniversary also provides an opportunity to focus ‘in either direction’, towards the past and the future simultaneously. However, there seems to have been a high degree of focus on the past in the Tapiola anniversary. As well as presenting Tapiola, it seems that the anniversary served as *confirming*, perhaps not as much *the* past as *a* past, cementing the idea of an identity related to the birth and existence of a place in time and space. The future, on the other hand, remained less clearly outlined, perhaps because of its less tangible expression. It was visualised in the exhibition on future construction projects, and formulated in speech passages regarding focusing on families with small children, for example. The time extension was strong towards the past, whereas explicit claims of what the anniversary would bring with it – formulated strategies beyond the anniversary so to speak – were few if not lacking altogether. The image of a past emerged more clearly than that of the future, for it was mostly the past that was visualised and narrated.

Tentative conclusions drawn from the study seem to point towards a possible further exploration of events as cultural stagings in relation to ideas of identity. What may be looked at in particular,

then, are the materialisations and symbolic representations of those ideas. The organising process may be described from a temporary organisation perspective, where activities and meanings attributed to them rather than actors become of key importance.

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